IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with strikethrough. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claims 6, 7, 13 and 14 and AMEND the claims in accordance with the following:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A business support system connectable to a plurality of external processing systems that are external to the business support system and that have different protocols, the business support system comprising:

a plurality of service request production means corresponding to the plurality of external processing systems, respectively, each of the service request production means producing service information request data, in a predetermined form for a corresponding one of the plurality of external processing systems, in response to a request of a user from a terminal apparatus used by the user, the terminal apparatus being one of a plurality of different communication means;

a plurality of data form conversion means corresponding to the plurality of external processing systems, respectively, each of the data form conversion means converting the form of the service information request data produced by a corresponding one of the service request production means into a form that can be processed by a corresponding one of the external processing systems and also for converting service information provided from the corresponding one of the external processing systems in response to the service information request data into the predetermined form; and

service information providing means for providing the service information converted into the predetermined form by one of the data form conversion means to the terminal apparatus originating the request for the service information.;

data management means for managing the service information converted into the predetermined form by the one of the data form conversion means;

determining means for determining whether or not the service information is updated by accessing the corresponding external processing system;

accessing means accessing the corresponding external processing system to send the service information request data converted into the form that can be processed by the

corresponding external processing system to obtain the service information with respect to the service information request data, when the determining means determines that the service information is not updated,

wherein the service information obtained from the corresponding external processing system is converted into the predetermined form by the one of the data form conversion means, managed by the data management means, and provided to the terminal apparatus by the service information providing means.

2. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The business support system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

sales campaign monitoring means for monitoring the effectiveness of a sales campaign based on the service information provided to users; and

service information determining means for deciding which type of service information should be provided to users depending on the effectiveness of the monitored sales campaign.

3. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The business support system as claimed in claim 2, further comprising service channel determining means for determining a providing means for providing service information to the users depending on the success rate of the monitored sales campaign.

4. (ORIGINAL) The business support system as claimed in claim 3, further comprising adjusting means that ensures that no one providing means for providing service information determined by the service channel determining means is overloaded.

5. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The business support system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the plurality of different communication means comprises a telephone, a facsimile machine, and a computer terminal.

6. (CANCELLED)

7. ((CANCELLED

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A business support system connectable to a plurality of

external processing systems that are external to the business support system and that have different protocols, the business support system comprising:

a plurality of service request production units corresponding to the plurality of external processing systems, respectively, each of the service request production units producing service information request data, in a predetermined form for a corresponding one of the plurality of external processing systems, in response to a request of a user from a terminal apparatus used by the user, the terminal apparatus being a one of a plurality of different communication units;

a plurality of data form conversion units corresponding to the plurality of external processing systems, respectively, each of the data form conversion units converting the form of the service information request data produced by a corresponding one of the service request production units into a form that can be processed by a corresponding one of the external processing systems and also for converting service information provided from the corresponding one of the external processing systems in response to the service information request data into the predetermined form; and

a service information providing unit providing the service information converted into the predetermined form by one of the data form conversion units to the terminal apparatus originating the request for the service information;

a data management unit managing the service information converted into the predetermined form by the one of the data form conversion units;

a determining unit determining whether or not the service information is updated by accessing the corresponding external processing system; and

an accessing unit accessing the corresponding external processing system to send the service information request data converted into the form that can be processed by the corresponding external processing system to obtain the service information with respect to the service information request data, when the determining unit determines that the service information is not updated,

wherein the service information obtained from the corresponding external processing system is converted into the predetermined form by the one of the data form conversion units, managed by the data management unit, and provided to the terminal apparatus by the service information providing unit.

9. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The business support system as claimed in claim 8, further comprising:

a sales campaign monitoring unit monitoring the effectiveness of a sales campaign

based on the service information provided to users; and

a service information determining unit deciding which type of service information should be provided to users depending on the effectiveness of the monitored sales campaign.

10. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The business support system as claimed in claim 9, further comprising a service channel determining unit providing service information to the users depending on the success rate of the monitored sales campaign.

11. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The business support system as claimed in claim 10, further comprising an adjusting unit ensuring that no one service channel providing service information determined by the service channel determining unit is overloaded.

12. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The business support system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the plurality of different communication units comprises a telephone, a facsimile machine, and a computer terminal.

13. (CANCELLED)

14. (CANCELLED)

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A business support system connecting to one or more external processing systems that are external to the business support system and that have different protocols and to a plurality of terminal apparatuses used by users, and providing information to a user in response to a request from the user, the system comprising:

request receiving means for receiving the request from the user through a corresponding terminal apparatus;

data requesting means for requesting, in response to the request received from the terminal apparatus of the user, contents of one of a plurality of data items of user information;

a plurality of access routine activating means corresponding to the one or more external processing systems, respectively, each one of the access routine activating means referring to item definitions relating the plurality of data items to corresponding data access routines, each data access routine issuing a data item request to obtain the contents of the one of the data items from the corresponding external processing system storing the contents, and for activating the data access routine corresponding to the one of the data items of the user information

5

requested by the data requesting means;

a plurality of data item request protocol converting means corresponding to the one or more external processing systems, respectively, each of the data item request protocol converting means converting the data item request, issued by the data access routine activated by the corresponding access routine activating means, into a protocol used for data exchange between the corresponding external processing system receiving the data item request and the terminal apparatus of the user, and for sending the data item request to the corresponding external processing system; and

information sending means for sending information corresponding to the request to the terminal apparatus of the user, the information being generated based on the contents of the one of the data items sent from the corresponding external processing system.;

data management means for managing the information being generated based on the contents of the one of the data items; and

determining means for determining whether or not the information is updated by accessing the corresponding system,

wherein one of the plurality of data access routines, which corresponds to the one of the data items of the user information requested by the data requesting means, is enabled when the determining means determines that the information is not updated.

16. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A business support system connecting to one or more external processing systems that are external to the business support system and that have different protocols and to a plurality of terminal apparatuses used by users, and providing information to a user in response to a request from the user, the system comprising:

request receiving means for receiving the request from the user through a corresponding terminal apparatus;

user information record managing means for managing a record area for recording contents of data items related to the user, the contents being obtained from one of the external processing systems;

data requesting means for requesting, in response to the request received from the terminal apparatus of the user, contents of one of the data items of user information;

a plurality of access routine activating means corresponding to the one or more external processing systems, respectively, each one of the access routine activating means referring to item definitions relating the plurality of data items to corresponding data access routines, each data access routine issuing a data item request to obtain the contents of the one of the data

6

items from the corresponding external processing system storing the contents, and for activating the data access routine corresponding to the one of the data items of the user information requested by the data requesting means;

a plurality of data item request protocol converting means corresponding to the one or more external processing systems, respectively, each of the data item request protocol converting means converting the data item request, issued by the data access routine activated by the corresponding access routine activating means, into a protocol used for data exchange between the corresponding external processing system receiving the data item request and the terminal apparatus of the user, and for sending the data item request to the corresponding external processing system; ~~and~~

information sending means for storing the contents of the one of the data items to a corresponding item area in the record area and for sending information corresponding to the request to the terminal apparatus of the user, the information being generated based on the contents of the one of the data items sent from the corresponding external processing system~~.~~;

data management means for managing the information being generated based on the contents of the one of the data items; and

determining means for determining whether or not the information is updated by accessing the corresponding system,

wherein one of the plurality of data access routines, which corresponds to the one of the data items of the user information requested by the data requesting means, is enabled when the determining means determines that the information is not updated.

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A business support system connectable to a plurality of external processing systems that are external to the business support system and that have different protocols, the business support system comprising:

a plurality of service request production means corresponding to the plurality of external processing systems, respectively, each of the service request production means for producing service information request data in a predetermined form for a corresponding one of the external processing systems in response to a request of a user from a terminal apparatus used by the user, the terminal apparatus being one of a plurality of different communication means;

a plurality of data form conversion means corresponding to the plurality of external processing systems, respectively, each of the data form conversion means converting the form of the service information request data produced by a corresponding one of the service request

7

production means into a form that can be processed by a corresponding one of the external processing systems and also for converting service information provided from the corresponding one of the external processing systems in response to the service information request data into the predetermined form;

service information providing means for providing the service information converted into the predetermined form by one of the data form conversion means to the terminal apparatus originating the request for the service information;

data management means for managing the service information converted into the predetermined form by the one of the data form conversion means;

determining means for determining whether or not the service information is updated by accessing the corresponding external processing system;

accessing means accessing the corresponding external processing system to send the service information request data converted into the form that can be processed by the corresponding external processing system to obtain the service information with respect to the service information request data, when the determining means determines that the service information is not updated;

wherein the service information obtained from the corresponding external processing system is converted into the predetermined form by the one of the data form conversion means, managed by the data management means, and provided to the terminal apparatus by the service information providing means;

sales campaign monitoring means for monitoring the effectiveness of a sales campaign based on the service information provided to users;

service information determining means for deciding which type of service information should be provided to users depending on the effectiveness of the monitored sales campaign; and

service channel determining means for determining a providing means for providing service information to the users depending on the success rate of the monitored sales campaign.

18. (WITHDRAWN) A data processing system connecting to one or more external processing systems that are external to the data processing system and that have different protocols from the data processing system, and to a plurality of terminal apparatuses used by users, and providing information according to a process in response to requests from the users, the system comprising:

a request receiving part receiving requests from terminal apparatuses of users;

a data requesting part respectively requesting, in response to the requests received from the terminal apparatuses, data items corresponding to the requests, the data items being stored in an external processing system;

an item definition part defining correspondences between a plurality of data items and data access routines, respectively, the data access routines issuing data item requests to obtain the data items from the external processing system that stores the data items;

an access routine activating part referring to the item definition part and activating the data access routines respectively corresponding to the data items requested by the data requesting part;

a data item request protocol converting part respectively converting the data item requests issued by the data access routines into a protocol used by the external processing system receiving the data item requests;

a communication part respectively sending the converted data item requests to the external processing system and receiving the data items from the external processing system;

an information sending part respectively sending information corresponding to the data item requests to the terminal apparatuses of the users, the information generated based on the data items sent from the external processing system;

a monitoring part monitoring the data items requested by each user; and

a determining part determining information to be provided to each user depending on an output of the monitoring part.

19. (WITHDRAWN) The data processing system of claim 1, further comprising a user information record managing part managing a record area that records the data items that are sent from the external processing system in response to the data item requests,

wherein the data requesting part determines whether the data items respectively corresponding to the data item requests exist in the record area managed by the user information record managing part, and enables the access routine activating part when any of the data items does not exist in the record area.

20. (WITHDRAWN) The data processing system of claim 19, further comprising a part that determines an effective channel for each user to provide the information to each user, respectively.

21. (WITHDRAWN) The data processing system of claim 20, further comprising a part that adjusts a rate at which the information is provided to each user depending on the output of the monitoring part.

22. (WITHDRAWN) The data processing system of claim 19, further comprising a part that adjusts a rate at which the information is provided to each user depending on the output of the monitoring part.

23. (WITHDRAWN) The data processing system of claim 18, further comprising a part that determines an effective channel for each user to provide the information to each user, respectively.

24. (WITHDRAWN) The data processing system of claim 18, further comprising a part that adjusts a rate at which the information is provided to each user depending on the output of the monitoring part.